Introduction

At least the New Fine Art Movement invites various responses from the Indonesian artists.

Although, some of them are ignorant, and merely consider the movement as the work of bored young people, without any desire to take a closer look at the motivations which gave birth to it.

But even if the movement becomes an object of ridicule, it means that its existence is still being recognised. The fact is, attacks, insults from various parties, and suspicion to the will of the movement to force change becomes increasingly fierce, and it goes on and on. The movement already exists and its activities have been repeatedly conducted. Its third exhibition will be held in the coming October.

This book which chronicles the works of the young artists who are members of the New Fine Art Movement III can be said to reflect their attitudes. Indeed, not all of the articles in this book can explain the motivations behind the movement; such answers which are expected to be able to explain the concepts and responses to the Indonesian fine arts can perhaps be found in the articles of its promoters, such as Jim Supangkat, which you are welcome to examine. With this movement, the New Fine Art artists do not presume to just present a “new style” in their artworks. They wish to instead highlight some Indonesian fine art issues which they hope can be solved at the same time. (Then does that mean that they don’t want for their artworks to be judged, a judgment which differentiates between the new and the old?)

A number of other articles in this book do not discuss about the New Fine Art at all. These articles are intentionally included, apparently to emphasize their attitude that the Indonesian fine art issues which arise lately have become an integral part of their thoughts.

Do people really need to look for the identity of this movement, when the identity of this movement can never be separated from the Indonesian fine art issues?

***

This book perhaps can be expected to explain more about the New Fine Art Exhibition, contemplating what the tendencies of the artists are like, and what are the objectives behind it. But, the opposite may also be true. The actual difficulty may arise because often people are already fixated to the fragmented art boundaries. Judging based on a view supported by rigid boundaries. Such attitudes will not disclose the issues. To look at this matter, it is better if the articles which contain the polemics between Sudarmadji and Kusnadi are reviewed. Likewise the article of Agus Tjahono concerning the articles of Jim Supangkat, Sanento Yuliman and Tuti Nurhadi (even though it can be said that they do not directly have an issue with the New Fine Art Movement).

In this book, the history of the establishment of the New Fine Art Movement is not explained, likewise, reputations which have been achieved are also not written. Indeed, they are apparently still questioning the continuation of their existence. They still have the will to reflect on the ideals they fought for, ideals based on the attitude to distance themselves from the traditional established style. Perhaps we need to question why saturation in the arts often happens. And it is very likely due to the rigid creation process, with judgment criteria which seems to be unyielding.

Tolerance is the guarantee for the birth of a new form of art statement, which has been felt to characterize the development of art for centuries in Indonesia. This reality has been recognized by many Indonesian artists, but by negating the colliding process of the concept of art creation. Likewise, with the New Fine Art Movement, some events that emerged as a result of fine art development in Indonesia can be seen nowadays. Collision of concepts and views should exist in the development of art history, but in Indonesian fine art, in the past, it received a lack of attention and appreciation, both from their artists as the creator and from the fine art observers.

Jakarta, 28 July 1979

Wiyoso Yudoseputro

Five Indonesian New Fine Art Movement Techniques That Will Force Change

1. In creating art, to throw away as far as possible the “fine art” image which has been recognized until now, (the movement considers it as “the old fine art”), i.e. a fine art which is only limited to the following: painting, sculpture and printmaking.
   In the Indonesian New Fine Art Movement, penetration among the forms of fine art as mentioned above, which may give birth to fine artworks which cannot be categorized into the forms above are considered “valid” (“the New Fine Art”).
   In creating art, to throw away as far as possible the image of the existence of special elements in fine art, such as elements of painting, elements of picture and so on. Overall it is in one category, visual elements which may be related to the elements of space, movement, time and so on.
   Thus, all activities which may be categorized as fine art in Indonesia, even though they are based on different “aesthetics”, for example the ones which come from traditional arts are reasonably deemed valid as a living fine art.
2. To throw away as far as possible the “specialist” attitude in fine art which tends to build “elitist language” based on the “avant-gardism” attitude built by the image of: an artist should dive into looking for subtle things (so that it could not be understood by public, because artist is part of a living mystery?).
   Instead, to believe in the “equality” aspect which exists in humanity due to the same living environment. To believe actual social issues as more important issues to be discussed rather than personal sentiments. In this matter, the wealth of ideas is more prioritized over “master” skills in working on form elements.
3. To crave “the possibility to work”, in the sense of expecting the diversity of styles in the Indonesian fine arts. To shower the Indonesian fine arts with new possibilities, recognizing all possibilities without any limit, including the “*cantikrisme*” teaching attitude where the style of a teacher is followed by his understudies, which actually may act differently, enrich the possibilities of “styles” of the Indonesian fine art.
4. To envision the “Indonesian” development of fine art by way of prioritizing knowledge on the New Indonesian Fine Art History, which started from Raden Salah. To study its periodization, looking critically and sharply at how it developed, considering and stacking any further developments. Believing that in this New Indonesian Fine Art History there are equal issues which are not even found in imported books, and able to fill the Indonesian fine art with issues which may produce high-quality development.
   To envision the fine arts development which is based on writings and theories of Indonesian people, either critics, historians, or thinkers. To deeply oppose the idea that the development of Indonesian fine arts is part of the World fine arts history, which says that art is universal, which means that the Indonesian fine art issues are dependent on the fine arts issues in Foreign Countries.
5. To envision a more lively fine arts industry, in the sense that its presence is no longer in doubt, reasonable, useful and widespread in the society.